

The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY
THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

VOL. II.

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No. 6

THE CHEERFUL LETTER.

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FREE GRACE.

"I have had plentiful wages beforehand, and I am sure I shall never earn the least mite."—*Cromwell.*

Lord, dost thou ne'er thy servants bless
Until their work is done?

Dost thou withhold thy tenderness
Till they the meed have won?

Lord, dost thou reckon with thine own,
Like taskmasters below?

First must the handiwork be shown?
Wilt thou the wages owe?

Nay, Lord, to thy dear servants fall
The wages long before:

The Taskmaster celestial
Hath paid them o'er and o'er.

How can we reckon up the grace
Each hour, each minute, brings?
How store thy gifts? how find a place
For all thy precious things?

O boundless treasure all unearned!
O wages given for naught!

Bestowed ere once our hearts have yearned,
Ere once our hands have wrought.

With eager love these hearts may burn,
These hands their utmost strain:

Still, Lord, one mite we cannot earn,
Thy love doth grace remain.

Oh, mourn thy servants, that there fall
No earnings to their lot?

Because thy love has given us all,
Lord, can we give thee naught?

Thine own no heavenly burden spare!
Withhold no task divine!

And let our eager love declare
The unbought grace of thine.

—*T. H. Gill.*

"ALL THINGS FOR GOOD."

"All things work together for good to them that love God."—Rom. viii. 28.

There is a strange, tender beauty at this season of the year, which we all must have felt. The woods and hills have put on their autumn dress of beauty and pride. The declining year has robed itself in majesty before bidding us farewell. And I think: "O beautiful world! world most full of beauty, which God has given us, why do we not enjoy thee more? Why are we so restless and discontented and unhappy, at war with ourselves, with those around us, even at war with Providence, when it seems as if we had only to open our hearts to all this infinite tide of God's love, and be happy?"

Certainly, if we believe in a God of infinite perfections, a God who loves all his creatures with an infinite love, of whom the sun shining alike on good and evil is the symbol, who desires that no one should perish, and who is also infinite wisdom, knowing how to make his creatures happy in the right way, and of infinite power to carry out all his plans in regard to them,—a God who is love, and who is above all, through all, and in all things; if we have this faith, we must believe that evil is transient, and good permanent, that evil is a means, and good the end, that the final results to each and all of God's creatures, who will only keep their faces turned the right way, must be good and increasing good.

Christ was certainly an optimist in this sense. He certainly believed the world was made and meant for good, and not for evil. God, to him, was the universal Father, whose providence was over all his creatures, and who numbered every hair of every head. When has optimism been put in plainer words than in the very first utterance of Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount, when he declares that for all sorrow, poverty, and hunger of soul, for all those in the midst of frightful persecution and tribulation, there is to be a profound blessedness, a divine comfort, a heavenly repose, a joy passing all understanding,—that, no matter what burdens men have to bear, if they come to him, they can have rest?

And, certainly, the *power* of Christianity is in this optimism. It helps the world, and gives to the world new courage and new life by inspiring hope. It comes to bring hope to all persons, at all times, in all situations. And by inspiring this hope it has made a new heaven and a new earth.

True optimism does not deny the reality of present evil, but declares that it is to become the means of future good. But, even thus limited, it is not easy to believe it. "Why is it," we ask, "when nature around us is so lovely and so full of peace that the human heart should be so weighed down with anxiety, sorrow, and sin? Why cannot we enjoy this beautiful world which God has given us?"

Coleridge answered this question when he said,

"We receive but what we give;
And in our life alone does nature live."

All depends on the attitude of our own mind and heart. Nothing can make us happy unless we have the secret of happiness within. Nothing can make us unhappy if we have that secret within. "All things work together for good to those who love God." Nothing works for good to those who do not love him.

It is what we carry with us and in us which determines what comes to us from without. It is so with knowledge. What quantities of things there are to be seen all around us, wherever we go; and how few of them we see! Some one says, "We do not see what is before our eyes, but what is behind them." Two men are travelling.

They pass through the woods. One of them sees only limbs and branches and green leaves. The other sees all the new varieties of vegetation which belong to the region, distinguishes plant from plant, discovers rare specimens. One man sees pictures in the landscape, sees the foreground and middle distance, sees the lights and shades. He is an artist: that is why he sees them. In every landscape we look at there is infinite knowledge quietly waiting till we are ready to observe,—picturesque effects for the artist, strange plants for the botanist, stratification and a whole world-history for the geologist, soils for the farmer, and, hidden away in it all, the love of God and a Father's smile for the loving heart of the Christian. "All things work together for knowledge for those who love knowledge."

We receive what we give: we find what we seek. Things come to those who are prepared for them. Every one carries with him a polar force to attract or repel. To him who has an inventive faculty, inventions come. To him who has a poetic faculty, poetry comes. Events wait on man as his servants, and things befall him according to the quantity and quality of his character.

According to this law, all things work together for good to those who love God. Those who love God—that is, those whose hearts long for that infinite good and beauty and truth which shall raise them above themselves, and purify them from evil—conquer their sins, make them true and generous and noble. Everything will make part of their education; everything will give them new opportunity; everything will help them, as sunshine or storm, summer or winter, helps the tree.

To those who love God, friendship and love come as blessed gifts to open the heart and teach it all tender affections. Human love becomes divine love when thus received. The parents receive their child as from God; and they see in the little thing a promise of God for the future, as well as a joy in the present. The family becomes a sacred place, the parlor is a church, the daily meal is a communion table, to those who love God. God's love comes out of human eyes to bless us, and an ineffable tenderness speaks to us in each word and

act and look of good will. We find a deeper meaning and a higher purpose in every friendship, because God has sent it to us; and we cease to fear that it will prove transient, because we know that what God gives he gives forever.

When, in his providence, God takes away our friends and leaves us alone, then, also, we find that this bereavement works for our good if we love God. We are alone, but not lonely. They come to us when they go away. They stay with us when they ascend to heaven. The love which was no mere earthly tie of convenience or pleasure, which loved what was best in the friend, and sought to impart good as well as to receive it, does not die: it lives. As the disciples, after Jesus left them, grew much more intimate with him, and understood him far better than before, and had him really nearer to them than when they saw him, so our friends who have gone away often seem nearer, and they bless us by lifting our hearts to the heavens which is their home, and we commune with their interior nature as we never did while we had them nearer to us.

We can often see, ourselves, how evils work together for good. As we look back over our lives, we see how disappointments, which seemed at the time most bitter and intolerable, turned out at last to be the best things we could have had. And so we may believe that, when we *cannot* see the good, good may yet be there. The child cannot see the good of his having to go to school and study when he wishes to go to play. He cannot look forward ten and twenty years, and see how his present studies are to help him. And, if we are immortal beings, our present trials and disappointments are perhaps a part of the discipline we need for some great result preparing for us hereafter. Whether we feel this or not depends on whether we love God, and believe really in him. If God is our father, then it must be right, whether we see it or not.

"All as God wills, who wisely heeds
To give or to withhold,
And knoweth more of all my needs
Than all my prayers have told."

Let us remember that we are here each day to do each day's duties with our whole mind, heart, soul, and strength. Let us

live in the whole, not in the half. Then, when we go inward to reflect, we put ourselves wholly in that, and find God's love and truth within the soul; and when we go outward to work, or to social intercourse, we put ourselves wholly in that, and find God's presence and inspiration also there. So the inward world and the outward world may be equally filled and animated with the presence and the smile of our heavenly father.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

THE STILL HOUR.

"I WILL FEAR NO EVIL, FOR THOU ART WITH ME."—PSALM xxiii. 4.

In heavenly love abiding,
No change my heart shall fear;
And safe is such confiding,
For nothing changes here.
The storm may roar without me,
My heart may low be laid,
But God is round about me;
And can I be dismayed?

Wherever he may guide me,
No want shall turn me back;
My Shepherd is beside me,
And nothing can I lack.
His wisdom ever waketh,
His sight is never dim:
He knows the way he taketh,
And I will walk with him.

Green pastures are before me,
Which yet I have not seen;
Bright skies will soon be o'er me,
Where the dark clouds have been.
My hope I cannot measure,
My path to life is free:
My Saviour has my treasure,
And he will walk with me.

—*Anna L. Waring.*

LUTHER'S "SIMPLE METHOD HOW TO PRAY."

Dear Master Peter,—I give you as good as I have, and will show you how I manage myself with prayer. Our Lord God grant unto you and every one to manage better. Amen.

First, when I feel that I am become cold and indisposed to prayer, by reason of other business and thoughts, I take my Psalter and run into my chamber, or, if day and season serve, into the church to the multitude, and begin to repeat to myself—just as

children use—the ten commandments, the creed, and, according as I have time, some sayings of Christ or of Paul or some Psalms.

It is well to let prayer be the first employment in the early morning and the last in the evening. Avoid diligently those false and deceptive thoughts which say, Wait a little, I will pray an hour hence: I must first perform this or that. For with such thoughts a man quits prayer for business, which lays hold of and entangles him, so that he comes not to pray the whole day long.

Howbeit, works may sometimes occur which are as good or better than prayer, especially if necessity require them. There is a saying to this effect, which goes under the name of Saint Jerome: "All the works of the faithful are prayer." And there is a proverb: "Whoso labors faithfully, he prays twice." The meaning of which saying must be that a believer fears and honors God in his labor, and thinks of his commandment, to do wrong to no man, not to steal nor take advantage, nor to betray. And, doubtless, such thoughts and such faith make his work a prayer and an offering of praise.

Of constant prayer, Christ indeed says, men ought always to pray. For men ought always to guard against sin and wrong, which no man can do except he fear God and set his commandment before his eyes. Nevertheless, we must take heed that we do not disuse ourselves to actual prayer, and interpret works to be necessary which are not necessary, and by that means become at last negligent and indolent, and cold and reluctant to pray. For the devil is not indolent nor negligent around us. And our flesh is alive and fresh toward sin and averse from the spirit of prayer.

Now, when the heart is warmed by this oral communion and has come to itself, then kneel down or stand with folded hands and eyes toward heaven, and say or think in as few words as possible.*

Finally, observe that thou must ever make the "Amen" strong, and not doubt but that God assuredly heareth thee with all his grace, and saith "Yea" to thy prayer. And think that thou kneelest or standest not alone, but the whole Christendom, or all pious Christians, with thee, and thou among

them, in consenting unanimous supplication which God cannot despise. And quit not thy prayer until thou hast said or thought, "This prayer hath been heard with God: that know I surely and of a truth." That is the meaning of Amen.

Also, thou must know that I would not have thee to repeat all these words in thy prayer; for that would make it at last a babble and a vain empty gossip,—a reading from the book and after the letter, such as the rosaries of the laity and the prayers of priests and monks have been. My purpose is to awaken the heart and instruct it what kind of thoughts to connect with the Lord's Prayer. If the heart be rightly warmed and eager for prayer, it can express these thoughts with very different words, perhaps with fewer, perhaps with more. For I myself do not bind myself to precisely these words and syllables, but say the words to-day after this fashion, to-morrow otherwise, according as I feel warm and free. I keep as nearly as I can to the same thoughts and meaning. But it will sometimes happen that, while engaged with some single article or petition, I walk into such rich thoughts that I leave the other six. And, when these rich and good thoughts come, one ought to give place to them and let other prayers go, and listen in silence, and on no account offer any hindrance; for then the Holy Ghost himself preaches, and one word of his preaching is better than a thousand of our prayers. And so I have often learned more in one prayer than I could have got from much reading and composing.—*Hedge's Prose Writers of Germany.*

THE BIBLE CLASS.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

[This article was printed a few years ago in the *Unitarian*.]*

Why did Jesus wish to be baptized? His own expression is, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." There seems to be here an expression of the becoming, suitable, proper, that which respects the relations of things.

*The beginning of this lesson is from the notebook of James Freeman Clarke. Several pieces of information—as, for instance, about the wedding at Cana—are obtained from Edersheim's extremely interesting volume, "Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah."

*Here follows, in the original, after a brief invocation, a paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer.

But wherein lay the propriety? It was *not* :—

1. As a part of the Mosaic ritual. The baptism of John was no part of the law.

2. Nor as a baptism to repentance; for Jesus did not need this.

3. Nor as an ordination of Jesus to be the Messiah; for this was not the idea of the baptism of John; was not so intended by John, nor so understood by the people; nor did Jesus intend to be recognized at this time as the Messiah by people generally.

The propriety was not founded in the Jewish ritual, the circumstances of the times, nor the position of Jesus, but lay in the *universal need of human nature*. There is a time in life, when, to one who has formed a religious purpose, a public and open profession of that purpose becomes suitable and proper.

We know, at present, where the baptism of Jesus took place. It was at a ford across the Jordan, about twenty miles from Nazareth, a little to the south of the Sea of Galilee. On the east of the Jordan lay the tract of desolate country which is supposed to have been the scene of the temptation.

The mention of the *dove* is something that seems to me to have been curiously misunderstood—a spiritual experience strangely materialized in the minds of readers. Matthew tells us, “The heavens were opened unto *him*, and *he* saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon *him*.”

Mark: “*He* saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon *him*.”

Luke: “Jesus also being baptized *and praying*, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended *in a bodily shape* like a dove upon *him*.”

John: “And John *bare record*, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon *him*.”

Notice here that Luke's is the only account which uses the expression “in a bodily shape.” Matthew and Mark say, “The heavens were opened unto *him*”; “*He* saw the heavens opened.” Matthew was an apostle. Mark received his account from an apostle,—Peter. Luke was not an apostle, and his Gospel is supposed to have been written somewhat later than the other two Synoptic Gospels. The words, “in a bodily

shape,” have the sound of an addition to the original story,—one of those almost inevitable exaggerations or expansions which occur when a thing is repeated from mouth to mouth. A person who is gathering materials for a history is very apt to collect some interesting information; but, the farther he goes from the original source, the greater becomes the danger of interpolation.

Of the four evangelists, one only is likely to have been present at the baptism of Jesus,—John. He says nothing of having seen a dove *himself*. Indeed, he can hardly be said to have written an account of the baptism of Jesus, only of a conversation with John the Baptist concerning it. John the apostle is supposed to have been a disciple of John the Baptist.

But *John the Baptist* does seem to say that *he* saw something “like a dove.” “I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon *him*.” Coming from the Baptist's own disciple, John the apostle, and probably written down by one of *his* disciples, directly from the lips of the apostle, it has a very authentic sound. What are we to understand by it?

Comparing all the accounts, I come to the following conclusions: 1st, That Jesus at the moment of his baptism—which was to him a moment of solemn self-consecration—had a deep, inward, spiritual experience; 2d, That at that moment he first became conscious of his mission; 3d, That this consciousness was accompanied by a revelation of the protecting love and care of God, and of his own personal relation to him; 4th, That he endeavored to describe this experience to his first disciples, using a figure not very unfamiliar to them, since in the Psalms of David and other parts of the Old Testament similar expressions occur,— (“the shadow of thy wings”).

When we read in the ninety-first Psalm, “He shall cover thee with his *feathers*, and under his *wings* shalt thou trust,” we do not think of *real* feathers and *real* wings. We understand the psalmist to express the idea that the protecting love of God is as real to him as the wings of a mother bird are to her nestling.

It seems interesting to me and worthy of notice that this very Psalm—the ninety-first—is the one which contains the words, “He shall give his angels charge over thee to

keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." We know, therefore, that this Psalm was in the mind of Jesus very soon after the baptism. It may have been a favorite one with him.

Jesus stepped out of the water "praying." It is an interesting suggestion of Edersheim that the only prayer Jesus taught his disciples may have been in his own mind at this moment. The opening sentences, at least, seem definitely to express what must have been the desire of his heart and the purpose of his life. "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," expresses the coming of the kingdom of God (the hope of every pious Hebrew), the spiritual nature of that kingdom, the personal relation of God to man, and with this came the conviction that upon him was laid the mission of making the truths which he saw so clearly realities to his fellow-men.

Jesus retired into the wilderness to prepare himself for his work by prayer and meditation. During his absence John the Baptist received the deputation from Jerusalem. This event seems to have taken place on the last day before the return of Jesus from the wilderness. For

"The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him." It should be noticed here that Jesus was on his way back from the wilderness, and that the place of the baptism (where John seems to have remained) was on his road.

"Again, the next day after, John stood, and two of his disciples." These "two disciples" are supposed to be Andrew (who is mentioned by name later) and John the apostle.

In consequence of what John the Baptist said of him, they followed Jesus, and "abode with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour." Not the tenth hour according to Jewish reckoning, but, as is now supposed, according to Roman reckoning,—the same as our own. It was therefore about ten o'clock in the morning. John and Andrew therefore spent the whole day with Jesus.

We come now to an interesting point. What was the day that these two disciples spent with Jesus? We have fortunately the means of ascertaining that it was the

Sabbath. Assuming the marriage at Cana to have been on Wednesday,—the day on which the wedding of a young girl was celebrated,—we are able to fix the five preceding days. Widows were married on Thursday, quietly, without a great festival. From the degree of festivity accompanying the marriage at Cana, it is safe to infer it was that of a young girl. We now find that Jesus returned from the wilderness to Bethabara on Friday; that he remained during Saturday for the needed Sabbath rest; and continued his journey into Galilee the next day,—Sunday,—taking with him Philip of Bethsaida, probably also Peter and Andrew and John the apostle. The meeting with Nathanael on the way is described; and the *third* day after, Wednesday, was the wedding at Cana.

Having traced these incidents, let us return to John the Baptist. Whence came the account of his sayings narrated in the first chapter of the Fourth Gospel? From his own former disciple, John the apostle. The other three Gospels have not recorded them. Is it too much to suppose that after the memorable Sabbath spent with Jesus the two disciples sought John the Baptist, and had a conversation with him about Jesus? Perhaps on the evening of the same Sabbath Jesus may have retired alone for rest and prayer, and John and Andrew returned, full of interest in what they had heard, to their former teacher.

If Jesus had told them of his experience at the time of his baptism, it would be very natural for them to speak of it to John the Baptist. When they began to tell him that Jesus "saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit of God descending like a dove," and that a voice from heaven said, "This is my beloved son," John, full of interest and sympathy, remembering the illumination of the face of Jesus as he went up out of the water "praying," a radiance that was not a transient gleam, but remained,—"abode" on him,—and gave a mysterious spiritual beauty to his face,—John answered, "Yes, I saw it; I saw that; I was close to him, and I saw the Spirit descend upon him; and I knew then that *he* was to be the Messiah. Not before that ["I knew him not,"—that is, knew him not as the Messiah]; but, when I saw his face as he looked up to heaven praying, I felt the conviction that he was the Son of God."

In the Gospel the conversation with John is mentioned *before* the visit to Jesus. I incline to think that there are *two* conversations accidentally mingled by the amanuensis of John the apostle, the first ending with the thirty-first verse, the second beginning with the thirty-second. This latter, I think, was *after* the Sabbath spent by John and Andrew with Jesus, in answer to what they related to the Baptist. Probably, also, it was written down in answer to a question, as so much of the beginning of the Gospel of John seems to be written.

When John the apostle had repeated the conversation so far as the thirty-first verse, some one may have said, "And did John the Baptist see the Spirit descending like a dove upon Jesus?" Then the apostle answers, "Yes, he told us that" ["John bare record"]. He said, "I saw the Spirit," etc. Then he continued his story, and told of the visit.

We cannot help wishing that we knew more of this,—that blessed Sabbath by the Jordan, when John the apostle first knew Jesus. Was it at this time that the disciples heard the story of the temptation? Was John from that hour "the beloved disciple"? Did not the "heaven open" also to the disciples as they listened? "*Come and see*," are the only recorded words; but they still sound for us across twenty centuries. Are they not spoken to us as to the disciples of John the Baptist?

L. F. C.

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

WHAT SHALL WE PLAY TO-DAY?

To illustrate the first rule, that of "opposites," I will describe a simple figure as drawn on cross-section. Enclose one of the squares by drawing first horizontal lines at the top and bottom, and one perpendicular on the left, and another on the right to connect the horizontals. Draw another square around this in the same way, making the lines three spaces in length, and yet another square, the lines being five spaces in length. The figure is now ready for ornamentation, either by adding large or small squares at the corners, parallelograms capped with square in the middle on each side, or in any other way the fancy may suggest, provided

we do not forget the rule,—top, bottom, left, right. By repeating this figure after we have learned to use oblique lines, numberless pleasing forms can be drawn. When we attempt to represent objects, the treatment must be a little different. Let us try a coffee-mill in perpendicular lines. Draw a line through four spaces, at its foot on each side draw *three* lines, each one space in length. It will be observed that these lines stand side by side in a row. Draw a similar row in the third space below.

It will be apparent that there are in the lower row seven short lines. Connect the rows by prolonging the two outer lines of the upper row on each side, until they join the lower row. Now, returning to the one long line, draw parallel with it at its top and on the right four lines one space in length, then two of *two* spaces in length having the inequality at the top, and we have quite a respectable picture of a coffee-mill. A little thought will enable us to make representations of many other objects, a chair, key, lamp, and dog-kennel, either with horizontal or perpendicular lines.

Children will amuse themselves for a longer or shorter time with blackboard or slate; but, as they have in this occupation the means of representing whatever they might make by the help of the previous gifts, and of preparing designs for all the succeeding gifts, I think mothers ought to require a little *more* than amusement even in the nursery. I would therefore make the drawing a daily exercise. The wise mother will manage so that it does not become a *task*, and she will not keep the children at work too long. She will also see that the tools are in good order, not necessarily by fixing them herself, but by having the children to do so. And what a pretty sight to see them all at the table, pencils in hand, puzzling their brains as to what they shall draw or looking eagerly for mother's "patterns"! By the way, I approve of a design on the board for the guidance of the very little ones. You would not ask your child to learn to write without a copy: why should you expect him to draw? Besides, children like to see some result of their labors; and it may surprise you to observe with what accuracy they will copy an elaborate figure.

As I would not put ruler and dividers into the hands of the baby of three or five,

neither would I forbid their use to a boy of nine or twelve. As I would teach the little tot freehand drawing (speaking in a very limited sense, for he must follow the blue lines of his cross-section), so would I encourage the boy to be very exact in the use of his instruments, and to make his drawing as beautiful and precise as possible. If he has the artistic instinct, he will soon, and of his own free will, venture beyond mere lines and angles; and, if he is not an artist, this training to mathematical accuracy may be of incalculable advantage to him. Many a man is a superior draughtsman who would have starved to death as an artist.

Finally, we must not expect too much of the children. We cannot make either artisans or artists in the nursery: we can only initiate the children into methods and ways of work.

ANNIE SWAYZE BRECK.

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[Send all matter for this department to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.]

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3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise, she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

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Will the clubs of young people who are willing to help us, including all circles, guilds, King's Daughters' Societies, Lend a Hand Clubs, etc., please to read the note from the editor on the last page?

OFFERS.

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A friend of the Book Club has sent Mrs. Millet a number of copies of the Columbus guide for distribution. Any person who is making a study of the work of Columbus and his successors may receive one by applying to Mrs. J. B. Millet, 150 Charles Street, Boston, Mass.

I have *Christian Registers*, beginning with Nov. 17, 1892, up to present date, with the exception of two copies, which I will be glad to send to any one wishing them. Address Mrs. A. W. Marshall, 739 North New Jersey Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

"Henry Esmond," by Thackeray, and "Crown of Olive" and "Sesame and Lilies," by John Ruskin, are offered by Miss Mary T. Reed, Roanoke Avenue, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

I will *lend* "Daily Strength for Daily Needs"; "Golden Words for Daily Counsel"; "Tender and True"; "Out of Darkness into Light," from the journal of a bereaved mother; "Endeavors after the Christian Life," forty-three discourses by James Martineau.

of England; "The Bible: What is it?" by J. T. Sunderland; "The Faith that makes Faithful"; James Vila Blake's "Essays"; "Making the Most of Life," by J. R. Miller; "Light on the Cloud; or, Hints of Comfort for Hours of Sorrow," by M. J. Savage; "A Year of Miracle," a poem in four sermons, by W. C. Gannett; "Seed Thoughts from Robert Browning." Address Mrs. M. H. Le Row, 331 Poplar Street, Roslindale, Mass.

Mrs. Frederic Dexter, 406 Marlborough Street, offers the following books, all rather shabby copies: A volume of Emerson's "Essays"; "Bits of Talk," by H. H.; "Vice Versa"; "Ephraim Peabody's Sermons"; "Sketches with Pen and Pencil"; "One Woman's Way"; "The Baby's Grandmother"; "Ignorant Essays"; "Verdant Green"; "The Sailing Boat"; "Maitre de Forges"; several paper novels.

I will give the following books to any one who wishes them: "The Story of our Mess," by soldiers and sailors of the war; "Cherry Ripe," by Helen Mathers; "Adventures of an Old Maid," by Belle Greene; "Past Forgiveness," by Lady Margaret Majendie; "The Conquering Redeemer," by Rev. W. A. Brown. Respectfully, Mrs. A. H. Ravesies, Dade City, Florida.

I have received much pleasure through *The Cheerful Letter*, though I never saw a copy of the magazine until some kind friend, I know not whom, sent me the September number. I have the following books and magazines, which I will gladly give to any one wishing them, provided the necessary stamps are sent for postage, as I do not feel able to pay the postage, or I would have sent them to shut-ins long ago. The books are: "Seven and Nine Years among the Comanches and Apaches"; "The Wonderful Adventures of Phra, the Phœnician" (paper); Buffon's "Natural History"; Parker's "English Composition"; Steele's "Physiology"; Dawson's "Hand-book of Zoölogy"; Poems by Milton and Gray; "Gospel Hymns No. 4, with Music"; "Sketches of Moravian Life and Character"; the *Observer* (a magazine of natural history) for 1892, one missing; *Hearth and Home*, one year; and the *Home*, for present year. Address Miss Mary H. Pittenger, Art, Clay County, Indiana.

REQUESTS.

I would be thankful to receive the book "Life of Robinson Crusoe" for my little son, and "Stepping Heavenward" for myself, picture-books for my little ones or any good books for myself and children. We like to read, but don't have money to buy books; and I would also be pleased to receive picture-cards for scrap-album, and to give to the Sunday-school children. If any one wishes to lend for that purpose, I will keep them till Christmas, then lend them to the little ones at our Sunday-school. Advertising cards with pretty pictures will do, if there are any. I have not thanked those that answered my call in the May number of *The Cheerful Letter*. I want to thank them this way. Every parcel was greatly appreciated. May God bless all that are helping to brighten the life of the shut-ins is the prayer of your shut-in friend, Mrs. Anna Teague, Empire, Christian County, Kentucky.

Mrs. D. D. Peach, Franklin, Tennessee, would like very much to receive a copy of "Heartsease," by Miss Yonge.

Mrs. L. E. Somerville, Viola, Minnesota, asks for books of instruction in art for her sixteen-year-old daughter, such as Vouga's "Art Folio," "Art Interchange," or *Ingall's Magazine*. She would also like any good magazine regularly.

(The secretary would have been glad to print Mrs. Somerville's letter, had it not been written on both sides of the paper).

Miss Langmaid would like the names of persons willing to send away, after reading them, Boston Sunday Herald, Every Other Sunday, St. Nicholas, Chatterbox, or Household. Address Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

Will you kindly send me any book that can be spared suitable for an invalid lady? It would be so highly appreciated. We live in a lonely country place, and some kind friend from the South sent us a copy of *The Cheerful Letter*. Respectfully, Mrs. A. Beck, Box 92, Merchantville, New Jersey.

My grandma wrote you in my behalf about two months ago; but, as I have never received anything, I concluded to write to you dear kind ladies myself. I am a little

boy eleven years old: my mamma died eight years ago, and left me to my grandma. I am not stout, frequently have to lose time from school. I live in the country: we have no neighbors. So reading is my greatest pleasure. I would be so glad if some of the *Cheerful Letter* band would send me something to read. I would like some *St. Nicholas* or histories for children or books of travel; and, ah! best of all, I would so love to have Abbott's "Napoleon," no matter how old it was, but so it was all there. Grandma says she knows it would interest me so much. Hoping I am not asking too much; for, indeed, I would be very grateful for anything sent me. I have nothing to offer in return except Florida gray moss: that I would gladly send. Excuse my writing with a lead-pencil; but I have been confined to the bed for several days with fever, though I am better to-day. Very truly, Ben E. Grey, Dade City, Pasco County, Florida.

(A letter received later acknowledges with thanks the receipt of a book on "Natural History" and "Robinson Crusoe." Next time, little Ben, write only on one side of your paper, and send your thanks directly to the person who sends the book.)

Can any one either give or lend me "Four Girls at Chautauqua" and any of Miss Jewett's books? Mary H. Pittenger, Art, Clay County, Indiana.

Will any one who has good works on book-keeping they will give away or exchange, please write to me? I would also like cancelled Columbian stamps. Florence Criste, Madeira, Ohio.

One of the directors of the Post-office Mission, 22 Cameron Avenue, West Somerville, wishes to thank the sender of "The Story of Ida." She would like to receive Numbers 2 and 12 of the first volume of *The Cheerful Letter*.

The following letter is published in the hope that it may meet the eye of the person for whom it was intended:—

My dear Friend,—I cannot rest till I have expressed to you my most hearty and sincere thanks for the practical sympathy you have manifested toward me in so generously responding to my request for the monthly issue of *The Cheerful Letter*. I received the

August issue the middle of last week. I read them with great joy, and get a real blessing out of them. There are in every number choice essays, clothed in soothing and comforting sentiments. It cheers one up to read and reread them.

Again, thanking you for your great kindness and assuring you I deeply appreciate it, am fraternally yours, Henry Wilson, 27 Bentinck Street, Goose Green, Wigan, England.

I have just written to Miss Bertha Langmaid, requesting that I be accepted as a member of the *Cheerful Letter* Society, and write to you to offer my mite. I have two years *Chautauquans*, some old *Century* magazines, the *Golden Rule*, and *Farm and Home* which I will gladly send to any one who will care for them. I would like to receive any of the following books, and will lend them or return them as requested: "Prince of the House of David," "Romola," "East Lynne," "The Alhambra." Hoping to receive a favorable reply, I am, respectfully, Lydia H. Farrell, Myrtle, South Dakota.

(Miss Farrell would have saved the secretary the trouble of copying her letter, had she written on only one side of her paper, as requested in the column of "General Information.")

Mrs. Emma Miner, Lisbon, New Hampshire, Box 45, would like to exchange the *Ladies' Home Journal* for this year's *Household*.

May I suggest the following books as peculiarly appropriate for Post-office Mission work, the last three being particularly helpful to shut-ins and thorn-bearers; namely, persons with permanent bodily infirmities:—

"Laddie and Miss Toosey's Mission," "The Story of Ida," "Misunderstood," by Florence Montgomery; "Kindling Thoughts," by Elizabeth Channing; "Thy Kingdom come," by Henry W. Foote; "The Faith that makes Faithful," "Life of Henry Fawcett" (the blind postmaster of England), "The Story of a Short Life," and last, but by no means least, the beautiful tract published by the American Unitarian Association, "The Thorn-bearer," by W. C. Gannett.

(The editor has hoped that some of Mr. Gannett's readers would offer the little tract "Blessed be Drudgery.")

I wish some one of the Cheerful Letter Exchange would send a Bible of good, plain print (suitable for an invalid to read) to Mr. McCommas Dodrill, Addison, Webster County, West Virginia, who is a rheumatic cripple, and cannot walk. The only Bible he has is of too fine print for him to read. His present home is in a wild, mountainous part of the county, twelve miles from the Post-office. It would be a pleasure to him if some gentleman invalid, who could furnish a stamp for reply, would write to him.

I have two good cloth-bound books,—“The Rise of Silas Lapham,” by Howells; and “Fern Leaves,” by Fanny Fern—which I will send to any one who will send eight or ten cents in stamps for postage on each book.

I would like “The Casting Away of Mrs. Lecks and Mrs. Aleshine” by Frank R. Stockton, “Swiss Family Robinson,” or any good book that will interest and brighten up the life of a weary country invalid, who wishes to forget her pain as much as possible. I have found that one of the surest ways of brightening up our own weary selves is to try to minister unto some one worse off than ourselves in His name.

I would be *very* thankful to receive a few orders for pretty, crocheted thread tidies, at eighty cents each. Miss Clara A. Sheldon, Albion, Dane County, Wisconsin.

I would dearly love to own a copy of “Gentle Measures in Training the Young.”

I have read it once, but it is a book that requires great thought, and, as I have four little ones intrusted to my care, I would like to have it where I could consult it often. I am a farmer's wife, and twelve miles from the nearest town of any size; and the only link I have with the civilized world is what I am able to procure from my books and papers. May God bless you and yours for the good work you are doing. Through the kindness of an unknown friend I receive *The Cheerful Letter*. It comes like a ray of sunshine into our isolated home; and, if the kind heart of the sender only knew how well it was appreciated, I believe she would feel fully repaid for the trouble. Gratefully yours, (Mrs.) L. E. Somerville, Viola, Minnesota.

(“Gentle Measures” has been sent.)

Kind Friends,—Most sincerely I thank every one that has made my life brighter by sending me letters, books, and papers that tell of heart-felt sympathy, words of cheer; and sympathy is what we poor invalids need, and I can say for one really thirsting after it. I live sixteen miles from town, and am glad when a team passes or a friend calls, so I will ask you all to remember me through the coming year with letters, books, and papers. Would like children's temperance papers, stories with a religious moral, Bible stories; and, if not asking too much, will some one send me *for mine*, books “Gates Ajar,” “Stepping Heavenward”? May God's blessing rest on each invalid and friend of Mrs. Maria Souther, West Levant, Penobscot County, Maine, Box 5.

Emerson's “Essays” is asked for by Mrs. Phebe J. Ector, 619 Liberty Street, Winston, North Carolina, Mrs. M. E. Oades, Olympia, Washington, Mrs. A. W. Butler, Mechanics' Falls, Maine.

“Christie Johnstone” is asked for by Mrs. D. O. Gilbert, Benkelmann, Dundy County, Nebraska, Mrs. N. D. Huggins, Sicily, Ohio, Rebecca P. Folger, Madeira, Ohio, Mrs. K. D. Stafford, Bradford, Texas, Mrs. A. W. Butler, Mechanics' Falls, Maine, Mrs. Mary A. Glenn, Holloway, Person County, North Carolina.

“Anna Maria's Housekeeping” is asked for by Mrs. Phebe J. Ector, 619 Liberty Street, Winston, North Carolina, Mrs. Geo. Halsey, Water Mill, Suffolk County, New York.

I live far away in the back woods; and as we have a large family (eight), and are very poor, we nearly starve for something to read. Could you send “Henrietta's Wish” to my young sister, Miss Luta Collins, Pear-sall, Texas? She lives in the drouth-stricken region of South-west Texas. Mrs. K. D. Stafford, Bradford, Texas.

(“Henrietta's Wish” has been sent to Miss Collins.)

I would like a French Dictionary; also a Zoölogy; any of Miss Alcott's works but “Jack and Jill”; “The Idle Thoughts of an Idle Fellow”; or “Three Men in a Boat,” by Jerome; “Nell,” by Violet White; Chambers's Encyclopædia. It looks so selfish to ask for so much. Mrs. M. C. Lawrason, Wicker, Cumberland County, North Carolina.

MISCELLANEOUS.

SECRETARY OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.

TREASURER OF CHEERFUL LETTER EXCHANGE,—Miss Louise Howe, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass., or Linden Place, Brookline, Mass.

EDITOR OF "CHEERFUL LETTER."—Miss L. Freeman Clarke, Jamaica Plain, Mass.

N.B.—Please notice the change in Miss Howe's personal address from Nahant to Brookline; and in Miss Clarke's from Magnolia to Jamaica Plain.

Subscriptions and renewals may be sent to the treasurer as above. The subscription is fifty cents a year.

Notice that requests for membership and for correspondents go to Miss Langmaid, our secretary; requests for books and offers of books, to Mrs. Millet; and to Miss Clarke only material for insertion in the paper (not Book Club matter). All such material should be written on *one side only* of the paper, and sent by the first of the month *before* that in which it is printed.

Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass., asks for names of subscribers to *The Cheerful Letter* who are willing to send off their copy of this paper to shut-ins or those not able to subscribe for it.

Those not able to subscribe for the paper, but desiring to receive it, may do so by writing to Miss Ellen R. Dewson, Quincy, Mass. Please give full name and address. Many of our members take the paper, in order to send it to those who are not able to subscribe for it.

Miss Langmaid asks for addresses of those who are willing to correspond with shut-ins or others desiring to receive letters. She has a list of applicants not yet provided with correspondents.

Will all subscribers or receivers of *The Cheerful Letter*, whose copy does not come regularly, or comes not correctly addressed, be kind enough to notify Miss Bertha Langmaid, 2 Gordon Terrace, Brookline, Mass.?

Send also all notices of *changes of address* to Miss Langmaid. Please do not send these notices to the editor, as it causes delay in the correction.

We have received a little book called "Childhood's Morning," for kindergarten use in Sunday-school and home, and cordially recommend it to the notice of our readers. It is not a service book, but is intended to help teachers who have not received regular training in kindergarten methods. The teacher does not carry the book to the Sunday-school with her, but prepares herself at home by study. It is by Mrs. E. G. Mumford, and is for sale by the Sunday School Society, 25 Beacon Street, Boston, Mass.

Miss Langmaid would like to receive names of those who have the following magazines to send away after reading them: *Harper's Young People*; *Youth's Companion*; *Housewife*; Boston daily or weekly papers.

There will be a meeting of those interested in the work of the Cheerful Letter Exchange at 25 Beacon Street, Boston, on Friday, December 1, at 10 A.M. All friends who can be present are cordially invited. It is hoped that Branches will send delegates.

Will any minister who receives this paper assist us by sending to our secretary names of invalids, and of young people living in lonely places without libraries, schools, or means of education, and especially the addresses of the mothers of young families living on ranches or prairies?

One object of the Cheerful Letter Exchange is to send good books and magazines to those who are not able to obtain them, especially to young people,—not only stories and novels, but books that are instructive as well as interesting, and will create a taste for good reading, and gradually may interest the reader in studying history or the natural sciences, and so be an education. Also such books as are helpful to mothers, Jacob Abbott's wise and helpful books of advice about training children, and such a magazine as the *Mother's Nursery Guide*. We need the name of the minister who sends us such addresses as a voucher for the person being really in need of our help and interest.

There is a cordial interest felt in this object by many of our young people living in cities, and an earnest desire to share their books and magazines with those who have but few. The books are all sent free.